

So the most valuable materials were stored in the basement. Then we get hit by these massive monsoon rains that flooded every building on that campus, including devastating and destroying some of the archives of the State.

This is, again, a disaster of stunning proportion. Tomorrow, top officials of FEMA and I will be going to North Dakota, accompanied by top officials of the USDA, to further assess the damage. I talked to the Governor today. He tells me he is readying a request for disaster assistance. Without question, we will be coming to this body once again to ask for assistance for a remarkable set of what can only be described as almost unimaginable occurrences. It does make me wonder if there is something going on with global climate change that we don't fully understand, to have these extraordinary sets of circumstances 8 years in a row. That is the fact. That is the circumstance that we face.

I wanted to draw my colleagues' attention to it. We in North Dakota have expressed our thanks to our colleagues on repeated occasions for the assistance provided North Dakota in the face of these remarkable natural disasters. I regret very much standing here today again drawing my colleagues' attention to what has occurred in my home State. I think it is important for colleagues to know this has occurred, and that, once again, we will be asking for assistance.

I yield the floor.

HEADSTONES AND GRAVE MARKERS AMENDMENT TO DEFENSE BILL

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, I rise today to express my appreciation to the bill managers, Chairman WARNER and Senator LEVIN, for accepting my amendment (No. 3549) regarding headstones and grave markers for veterans.

This amendment entitles each deceased veteran to an official headstone or grave marker in recognition of that veteran's contribution to this nation.

This amendment is identical to a bill I introduced last year, S. 1215, which has the support of veterans groups such as The American Legion, The Retired Enlisted Association and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. It is cosponsored by Senators BYRD, KENNEDY, SANTORUM, CONRAD, LEAHY, KOHL, FEINGOLD and LIEBERMAN.

There is no more appropriate time for this amendment. Last month, we commemorated Memorial Day. In just a few days our nation will observe Independence Day. Each of these holidays reminds us of the sacrifices made by our veterans. Today our nation is losing one thousand World War II veterans each day. And although they do not boast or brag much, we are all well

aware of their monumental contribution to America's remarkable history of freedom, prosperity and political stability.

This amendment would enable their country and their families to recognize that contribution.

As anyone who has made burial arrangements for a deceased veteran knows, the Department of Veterans Affairs must provide a headstone or grave marker in recognition of that veteran's service.

What some may not know, and what this amendment would change, is that once a family places a private headstone on their veteran's grave, they forfeit their veteran's entitlement to the official VA headstone or marker.

This law has its origins in the period following the Civil War when our nation wanted to ensure that no veteran's grave went unmarked. Today, however, when virtually no one is buried in an unmarked grave, the VA headstone or grave marker serves to officially recognize a person's service in the U.S. armed forces.

The present policy generates more complaints to the VA than any other burial-related issue. About twenty thousand veterans' families contact the VA each year to register their belief that their family member is due some official recognition for his or her military service regardless of whether a private headstone has been placed on the grave.

A constituent of mine, Mr. Thomas Guzzo, first brought this matter to my attention. His father, Agostino, a U.S. army veteran, passed away in 1998.

Agostino Guzzo is interred in a mausoleum at Cedar Hill Cemetery in Hartford, but his final resting place does not bear any official military reference to his service in the U.S. Army. Agostino Guzzo's family wants an official VA marker, but, because of the policy I have described, they cannot receive one.

Faced with this predicament, Thomas Guzzo contacted me, and I attempted to straighten out what I thought to be a bureaucratic mix-up. I was surprised to realize that Thomas Guzzo's difficulties resulted not from some glitch in the system, but rather from the law itself.

I wrote to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs regarding Thomas Guzzo's very reasonable request. The Secretary responded that his hands were tied as a result of the obscure law to which I have just referred.

This amendment is a modest means of solving an ongoing problem that continues to be a source of irritation to the families of our veterans. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that it would cost three million dollars during the first year it is in effect, and about two million dollars per year thereafter. That is a small price to pay to recognize our deceased veterans and put their families at ease.

Prior to November 1, 1990, when a veteran passed away, the VA was required to provide a headstone or grave marker unless a family bought a private headstone. For those families, the VA provided a check for the amount, about \$77, it would have spent on a headstone. This amendment will not reenact that policy, which was discontinued due to cost considerations. It simply says that an official VA marker or headstone will be provided for those families that ask for one, and may be placed at a site that they deem to be appropriate. In most cases, families that have placed a private headstone will request a marker—a \$20 brass plate—that would be mounted to the headstone. Surely we can do that much for our veterans in this time of budget surpluses.

This amendment allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to better serve veterans and their families, and I encourage my colleagues to listen to the thousands of veterans' families who simply hope to recognize a family member's military service.

The Greatest Generation gave so much to this country in life, this is the least we can do for them when that life comes to an end.

They did their duty and answered the call to serve. It is up to us to give them the modest recognition that they deserve.

Again, I want to thank the managers for their support and the Senate for adopting the amendment. I am hopeful that this provision will be maintained in the conference report.

COPING WITH A CHANGING KOREAN PENINSULA: AVOIDING RIGIDITY AND IRRATIONAL EXUBERANCE

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise to begin a discussion of the tremendous strategic consequences which may flow from events now underway on the Korean Peninsula.

As we debate spending on non-proliferation programs—including support for the Korean Energy Development Organization created by the 1994 Agreed Framework, which was significantly reduced in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Bill just passed by the Senate—it is important to keep the big picture in mind. We need to remain flexible in the face of a changing world, avoiding the twin pitfalls of rigidity and what Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan refers to as "irrational exuberance."

Our decisions today will help shape the strategic environment that our children and grandchildren will live with tomorrow.

I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I think I have a good handle on some of the key questions, and I hope my colleagues will bear them in mind as we move forward.

A decade after the end of the cold war, the American people are entitled to feel puzzled and dismayed by the continued hostile division of the Korean peninsula along the 38th Parallel. More than a million soldiers, including 37,000 Americans, thousands of artillery tubes, and hundreds of tanks, are clustered along a heavily-fortified border 155 miles long. If ever a place were ill-named, it would be the so-called "Demilitarized Zone" on the Korean Peninsula.

Today, the two Koreas could not be more different.

North of the DMZ, people live in unimaginable poverty and hardship. As many as 2 million North Koreans have perished as a result of famine and disease over the past 4 years.

The 22 million who have survived live under one of the most repressive and brutal regimes on the planet.

Their leader, Kim Jong-il, was, until recently, a recluse. We didn't know much about him, although there were plenty of rumors. He was said to be mad, irrational, a playboy obsessed by Hollywood movies. He was the "perfect rogue" in charge of the world's most dangerous "rogue" nation.

South of the DMZ, 47 million Koreans live in a flourishing democracy, one of the most productive societies on the planet. They enjoy one of the highest living standards in Asia, or indeed, in the world. Their country is completing a remarkable transformation from authoritarian rule to full-throated democracy.

They are a steadfast U.S. ally, and have shed blood and put their lives on the line alongside U.S. forces from Vietnam to the Middle East.

South Korea's leader, President Kim Dae-jung, is a visionary and a man of peace. Long imprisoned for his support for democracy and rapprochement with North Korea, Kim had the courage to extend a hand of peace and friendship across that DMZ, and the peninsula may never be the same.

Mr. President, the Korean Peninsula is hallowed ground.

This is where Americans of the 2nd Infantry division struggled their way up Heartbreak Ridge in order to help secure a defensive line which has remained static for the past 50 yrs. It is a battlefield on which 900,000 Chinese, 520,000 North Korean, 250,000 South Korean, and more than 33,000 American combatants lost their lives. It is ground on which as many as 3 million civilians—ten percent of the total population—perished during three years of desperate fighting.

The Korean Peninsula is also perilous ground.

The North has not withdrawn any of its heavy artillery poised along the Demilitarized Zone. It has not yet ended all of its support for terrorist organizations. And, perhaps of greatest concern to the U.S., North Korea has not

stopped its development or export of long-range ballistic missile technology. The North's missile development poses a threat not only to our allies South Korea and Japan, but to others in regions destabilized by North Korean arms merchants.

In short, the North Korean threat remains today the most obvious strategic rationale for America's forward-deployed military forces in the Pacific Theater. Roughly 100,000 men and women of the armed forces safeguard U.S. interests in East Asia.

The North Korean threat is also the most obvious strategic rationale for those who advocate the development and deployment of a limited National Missile Defense. As the expression went back in the early 1980's, "One A-bomb can ruin your whole day."

Mr. President, it is too soon to pop the champagne corks. Euphoria is not an emotion that lends itself to sound foreign policy-making. As President Kim Dae-jung himself has said, we must approach North Korea with a "warm heart and a cool head."

Having said all of that, it would be the greatest folly for us not to consider the potential significance of what is happening on the Korean peninsula, not just for Northeast Asia, but for the future of United States strategic doctrine and our role in the Pacific.

Mr. President, the world does not stand still. The "plate-tectonics" of Northeast Asia are fluid. The realignments underway could have a profound impact on our force posture and role we will play, with our friends and allies, in helping to secure a peaceful and stable East Asian environment for our children and grandchildren.

With the emergency of Kim Jong-il from what he jokingly admitted was a "hermit's" existence in North Korea, we are beginning to see the rewards of patient diplomacy backed by strong deterrence. If implemented, the agreement reached in Pyongyang—especially provisions for family reunion visits, economic cooperation and eventual peaceful unification—promises to reduce tensions in this former war zone and enhance economic, cultural, environmental, and humanitarian cooperation on the peninsula.

In five years' time, we might be evaluating a new North Korean missile threat. Alternatively, we might be marveling at the creation of a genuine demilitarized zone linking, rather than separating, North and South.

North Korea appears to have made a strategic decision that reforming its moribund economy and normalizing relations with its neighbors are the keys to the survival of the regime.

This decision was not made at the summit. It has its origins in the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the success of China's economic reforms. Absent Soviet subsidies and military, North Korea

has become a desperately poor country, unable even to feed itself. It has begun to seek accommodation, even on tough issues involving national security.

Just yesterday, in response to President Clinton's decision to lift some economic sanctions on the North, the North Koreans agreed to extend the missile launch moratorium it has observed over the past year.

The North also agreed to engage in a new round of talks next week with the Administration. These talks will take time, but they could ultimately lead to a decision by North Korea to forego future missile exports and curtail its development of long range missiles.

What would be the consequences of a world in which North Korea no longer posed a significant threat to its neighbors? Where would our interests lie?

It's hard to answer the first question without first engaging in thorough deliberations not only with our allies South Korea and Japan, but also with others with a stake in preserving peace and stability in northeast Asia, most notably China and Russia. I believe those deliberations should begin now. We should not wait for events to dictate an answer to us, as occurred in the Philippines when we suddenly found ourselves without bases on which we had staked much of our future in Southeast Asia.

It's a little bit easier to answer the second question. I believe our enduring interests are clear.

First and foremost, will be our desire to preserve peace and stability. There are regional tensions beyond the division of the peninsula.

Japan and South Korea have unresolved territorial disputes and a historical legacy of war and mistrust. The Perry Initiative has helped forge a remarkable trilateral spirit of cooperation, and we should seek to ensure that spirit lives on even after the threat of a second Korean War is laid to rest.

Japan and Russia have much the same difficulties as do Japan and South Korea, and we should do our part to help them to resolve their differences peacefully.

Second, we must pursue non-proliferation. The danger of nuclear proliferation will not evaporate just because North and South Korea are reconciled. U.S. strategic doctrine—especially our decision on whether to proceed with the development and deployment of a National Missile Defense—will have a huge impact on whether Japan goes nuclear, which would immediately trigger a Korean response, and whether China builds more ICBMs or decides to MIRV a future generation of missiles.

The North Korean threat is literally and figuratively a "moving target." We should make sure that our aim is true, and that we do not inadvertently cause more problems than we solve in our haste to address it.

Third, we will want to foster respect for international norms in the areas of human rights and the environment. This will be particularly important in our relationship with China.

Fourth, we will continue to seek economic openness, including securing sea lanes of communication. A decision looms before the Senate on whether to extend permanent normal Trade Relations to China.

I support PNTR for China, in part because I believe it is an essential ingredient of an overall strategy which secures a place for us in more prosperous and economically integrated East Asia.

For all of these objectives, maintenance of robust U.S. military capabilities, forward deployed in the region, will be essential, although the composition of those forces is likely to change as their roles and missions evolve. Our forward-deployed forces and the maintenance of strong strategic airlift capabilities at home enable us to respond swiftly and effectively to regional contingencies, humanitarian disasters, and political instability which might impact our vital interests.

Mr. President, as I said at the outset, I think we may be witnessing something extraordinary underway in Northeast Asia. We don't know exactly how it is all going to play out. But we had best begin now to discuss the potential implications. The decisions we make today will shape the strategic environment and the tools we have to advance our interests in East Asia tomorrow.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

GUN VIOLENCE

Mr. WYDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to speak about the tragedy that is gun violence.

On May 21, 1998, 15 year-old Kip Kinkel walked into Thurston High School in Springfield, OR and opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle in a crowded cafeteria, killing two classmates and wounding two others. Kinkel had been arrested the day before the shooting for bringing a gun to school. However, police decided that he was not a threat and released him to his parents. The next morning, Kip Kinkel shot his parents to death at home before he went to school and opened fire on his classmates.

The entire state of Oregon went into shock. The Mayor of Springfield called upon lawmakers to institute a mandatory detention period for students caught bringing guns to school. In response, Senator GORDON SMITH and I introduced S. 2169, a bill that would provide a 25 percent increase in juvenile justice prevention funds to those states that implemented a 72-hour detention period for any student who brought a gun to school.

The idea behind the bill is straightforward. If a student brings a gun to

school, he or she must be removed from the school and moved to a secure place where the student can be evaluated and the community protected.

A month later, on July 23, 1999 Senator SMITH and I offered a modified version of S. 2169 as an amendment to the Senate Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations bill. The "24 Hour Rapid Response for Kids who Bring a Gun to School," amendment passed unanimously. Unfortunately, conservative House members, with close ties to the National Rifle Association, objected to any so called "gun measures" on the bill, and the amendment was removed.

On May 19, 1999, Senators SMITH, HATCH, and I teamed up to offer a revised version of the 24-hour Rapid Response amendment to S. 254, the Juvenile Justice bill. The amendment was accepted by the bill managers. Sadly, the bill has languished in the Conference Committee since that time.

Consequently, I have offered the 24-hour Rapid Response amendment on S. 1134, the Education Savings Act and S. 2, the Educational Opportunities Act, and will continue to offer it until such time that schools are safe for all our children. This is not about guns. It's about safety.

Since this amendment has not been enacted and because the legislation that would give law enforcement the tools to stop gun violence have been stalled, I come to the floor today to continue reading the names of those who fallen to gun violence.

Following are the names of some of the people who were killed by gunfire one year ago today, June 22, 1999:

Sean Atkins, 33, Baltimore, MD; Cedric Biglow, 22, Oklahoma City, OK; Michael A. Clifton, 35, Chicago, IL; Dredunn Cooper, 20, Houston, TX; Max Johnson, 28, Dallas, TX; Willie Ray Lewis, 23, New Orleans, LA; Rico Mosley, 19, Atlanta, GA; Richard Neely, 75, Chicago, IL; James Edward Shea, 75, Cape Coral, FL; Steve Taylor, 25, Philadelphia, PA; Joel A. Thompson, 20, Chicago, IL; Michael Williams, Atlanta, GA; Marduke Jones, Detroit, MI

NATIONAL EARLY LITERACY SCREENING INITIATIVE

Mr. COCHRAN. Mr. President, recently, the National Reading Panel submitted its report to Congress. That report shows the best current research on how children learn to read. One of the significant studies included in the research is the product of the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. The research actually began as a result of the 1985 Health Research Extension Act which charged NICHD with the research task of finding out why children have trouble learning to read.

The U.S. Department of Education reports a 42% increase in the number of students with specific learning disabilities receiving special education serv-

ices over the past decade, with 2.7 million students ages 6-21 currently being served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. As many as 90 percent of these students have significant, if not primary, special education needs in the area of reading.

In the NICHD study, one of the most important discoveries was that 90-95% of those children with reading difficulties could be on track with their peers by third grade if they are identified at an early age and given the appropriate training. And that, Mr. President, is the greatest step we can make toward successful learning for these children.

Currently, there is no readily available, scientifically based, easy-to-use screening tool to test children for reading readiness skills. And, there is no coordinated effort for parents and other early care providers to identify children who show signs of early literacy difficulties and to provide them research-based information and support.

The National Center for Learning Disabilities has recently completed a plan to provide parents, early childhood professionals, and other care providers with an easy to use early literacy screening tool, access to information about the critical importance of early oral language and literacy experiences, and resources that will inform and enhance early instruction and learning. The Report to the House-passed version of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill includes a recommendation that NICHD fund this initiative.

I hope that as we work through the differences in this bill, adequate funds will be provided to NICHD to fund the National Early Literacy Screening Initiative.

NOMINATION OF EDWARD GNEHM, JR. FOR AMBASSADOR OF AUSTRALIA

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, this is truly one of the highlights of my Senate career, an instant replay memory I will recall and cherish for a long time to come. For today I was able to read and have approved the nomination of my college roommate to serve as Ambassador. It's something we would have never dreamed we would be a part of back in the days when we were rooming together just down the street from the United States Capitol at George Washington University.

I first met Edward Gnehm, Jr., or "Skip" as everyone has come to know him, years ago and we quickly became friends. In fact, Skip was my fraternity brother and he is the only brother that I have ever had—of any kind—in my life. He was my roommate for three years and he's been my friend ever since. As I hit the books and studied about accounting and business, he was